

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
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R 160830Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4316
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
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SUBJECT: POSITIVE GDR SIGNALS ON TRADE COINCIDE WITH ENTRY REFUSALS

REF: BERLIN 5493

1. THE OPENING OF THE ANNUAL LEIPZIG FAIR MARCH 13
FOUND THE GDR SENDING ENCOURAGING SIGNALS TO THE FRG
ON TRADE WHILE TURNING BACK ABOUT 170 FRG CITIZENS
ATTEMPTING TO VISIT THE FAIR. HONECKER'S POSITIVE
REMARKS ON TRADE DURING A VISIT TO THE EXHIBIT
OF THE FRG FIRM SALZGITTER AG ON THE OPENING DAY OF
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THE FAIR WERE FOLLOWED THE NEXT DAY BY FRG PROTESTS
IN BONN AND EAST BERLIN AGAINST THE INCREASING GDR
PRACTICE OF REFUSING ENTRY TO CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF
FRG CITIZENS.

2. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND REPORTED MARCH 14 THAT, IN
THE PRESENCE OF FRG REPRESENTATIVE GAUS, HONECKER

STATED THAT THE GDR CONSIDERED FRG/GDR ECONOMIC TIES " USEFUL" AND ADVANTAGEOUS TO BOTH SIDES. HE THEN STRESSED THAT EXISTING POLITICAL DIFFERENCES NEED NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS. REMARKING THAT THE FRG/GDR POLITICAL SITUATION WAS NOT AS BAD AS FRG MEDIA CHARACTERIZED IT, HONECKER DECLARED THAT BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WOULD DEVELOP FURTHER AS LONG AS " REASON AND GOOD WILL" PREVAILED ON BOTH SIDES. WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS, BUT NOT ND, REPORTED THAT HONECKER REFERRED TO FRG/GDR RELATIONS AS " CAPABLE OF IMPROVEMENT."

3. WHILE HONECKER WAS MAKING THE ROUNDS IN LIEPZIG, GDR BORDER OFFICIALS WERE TURNING BACK UP TO 170 FRG CITIZENS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE GDR TO VISIT THE LEIPZIG FAIR. AS HAS BEEN THE CASE IN RECENT REFUSALS IN WEST BERLIN, THOSE REJECTED FELL INTO THREE CATEGORIES; FORMER GDR CITIZENS WHO LEFT THE GDR LEGALLY IN THE RECENT PAST; FRG CITIZENS WITH RELATIVES OR FRIENDS IN THE GDR WHO HAVE APPLIED TO EMIGRATE; AND FRG CITIZENS RECENTLY RELEASED FROM GDR PRISONS.

4. ND REPORTS MARCH 15 THAT IN MEETINGS BETWEEN GAUS AND NIER IN EAST BERLIN AND BETWEEN MICHAEL KOHL AND WISCHENWSKI IN BONN, THE GDR REJECTED FRG PROTESTS ON THE LEIPZIG FAIR ENTRY REFUSALS. ACCORDING TO ND, THE GDR CONSIDERED SUCH QUESTIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AS FALLING EXCLUSIVELY UNDER ITS SOVEREIGN COMPETENCE. IN ITS COVERAGE OF THESE MEETINGS , ND ALSO REPORTED THAT BOTH GDR REPS EXPRESSED GDR RESOLVE TO DEVELOP RELATIONS WITH THE FRG AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ON THE BASIS OF HELSINKI, WHICH WOULD CREATE THE BASIS FOR " FURTHER NEW TREATIES WITH NEW POSSIBILITIES."

5. COMMENT: GDR CONFIDENCE THAT THE FRG WILL NOT REACT WITH ECONOMIC SANCTIONS TO RECENT GDR ACTIONS AFFECTING TRAVEL TO THE GDR WAS EXPRESSED TO EMBOFFS BY MFA OFFICIALS SEIDEL RECENTLY (REFTEL). THIS APPARENT CONFIDENCE IS NOW SHOWN AGAIN IN HONECKER'S CLAIM IN LEIPZIG THAT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS CAN DEVELOP SEPARATELY, AS WELL AS IN THE MIXTURE OF POSITIVE GDR SIGNALS TO THE FRG ON TRADE AND REFUSAL TO ALLOW CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF FRG CITIZENS TO ENTER THE GDR FOR THE FAIR.

6. ALTHOUGH IT HAS PLAYED UP THE POSSIBILITY OF TRADE DIVERSIFICATION WITH OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, THE GDR HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT NEEDS FRG TRADE AND WANTS THE FRG/GDR TRADE RELATIONSHIP TO CONTINUE. AS A CASE IN POINT, ALTHOUGH THE FRG SALZGITTER FIRM WAS APPARENTLY UNDERBID BY AN ITALIAN COMPANY IN COMPETITION FOR A LARGE CONTRACT TO BUILD A STEEL WORKS IN BRANDENBURG, ITS CHAIRMAN REPORTED THAT HONECKER ENCOURAGED THE FIRM TO CONSIDER OTHER PROJECTS AND EVEN DISCUSSED POSSIBLE FRG/GDR COOPERATION IN THIRD MARKETS.

7. WE NOTE IN PASSING THAT HONECKER, WHO GDR OFFICIALS INSIST DOES NOT SEEK A PERSONALITY CULT, SET A RECORD OF SORTS BY HAVING HIS PHOTO APPEAR 22 TIMES IN THE MARCH 15 ND COVERAGE OF HIS LEIPZIG FAIR VISIT.

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Sent Date: 16-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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